

The Online Informal Learning of English: opportunities from non-classroom contacts with English.

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Disclaimer

What follows is not primarily socio-linguistics.

In language didactics, we are interested in factors affecting the teaching and learning of English. Any change in attitude to English due to extra-curricular use of the language has significant implications for classroom practice.

We will try to identify some discourses and debates as we go along.

Plan

Introduction: 2-speed Europe

Data: The online informal learning of English

Attitudes: of learners, of teachers

Consequences: for countries where the level of English is relatively weak.

A conference series with SWOT on its mind

The classic strategic planning method

Strength (internal) Weakness (internal)

Opportunity (external) Threat (external)

Our theme in this series of conferences is therefore English as an external factor.

In the study of second language acquisition, we get a fuller picture when also looking at inherent strengths and weaknesses in English use.

Issue 1: the impact of E in E varies according to levels of language skills

Dubbing Europe / Subtitling Europe

US and GB television programmes are shown extensively in Europe.

In some areas the material is dubbed into the local language (examples: France, Spain). In others it broadcast in English with local language subtitles.

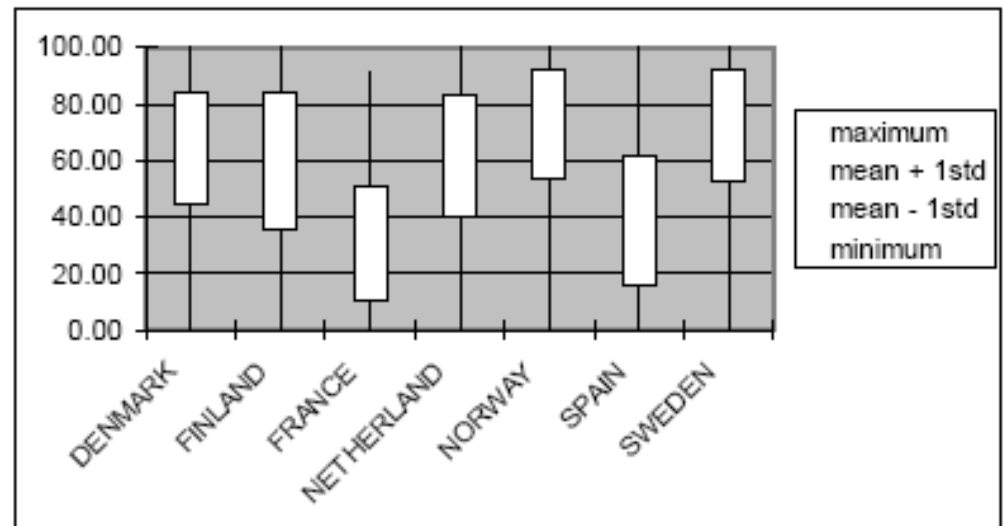
For many years, this had an effect on listening comprehension skills.

(Bonnet 2002).

Table 2. Oral Comprehension scale.

	Mean	Std Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
DENMARK	64.77	20.07	0	100
FINLAND	59.85	24.52	0	100
FRANCE	30.60	20.39	0	91.67
NETHERLAND	61.63	21.44	0	100
NORWAY	73.26	19.60	0	100
SPAIN	38.33	23.08	0	100
SWEDEN	72.18	19.65	0	100

Figure 1. Oral Comprehension scale.



The online informal learning of English

.A series of practices: TV, MOD, FB

.OILE is emergent, incidental, unscheduled and non-linear.

Incidental acquisition: learning without the intention to learn, while paying attention to another aspect of the stimulus.
(Hulstijn 2003)

Complex systems theory (Larsen Freeman & Cameron, 2008) makes a good theoretical framework for these phenomena

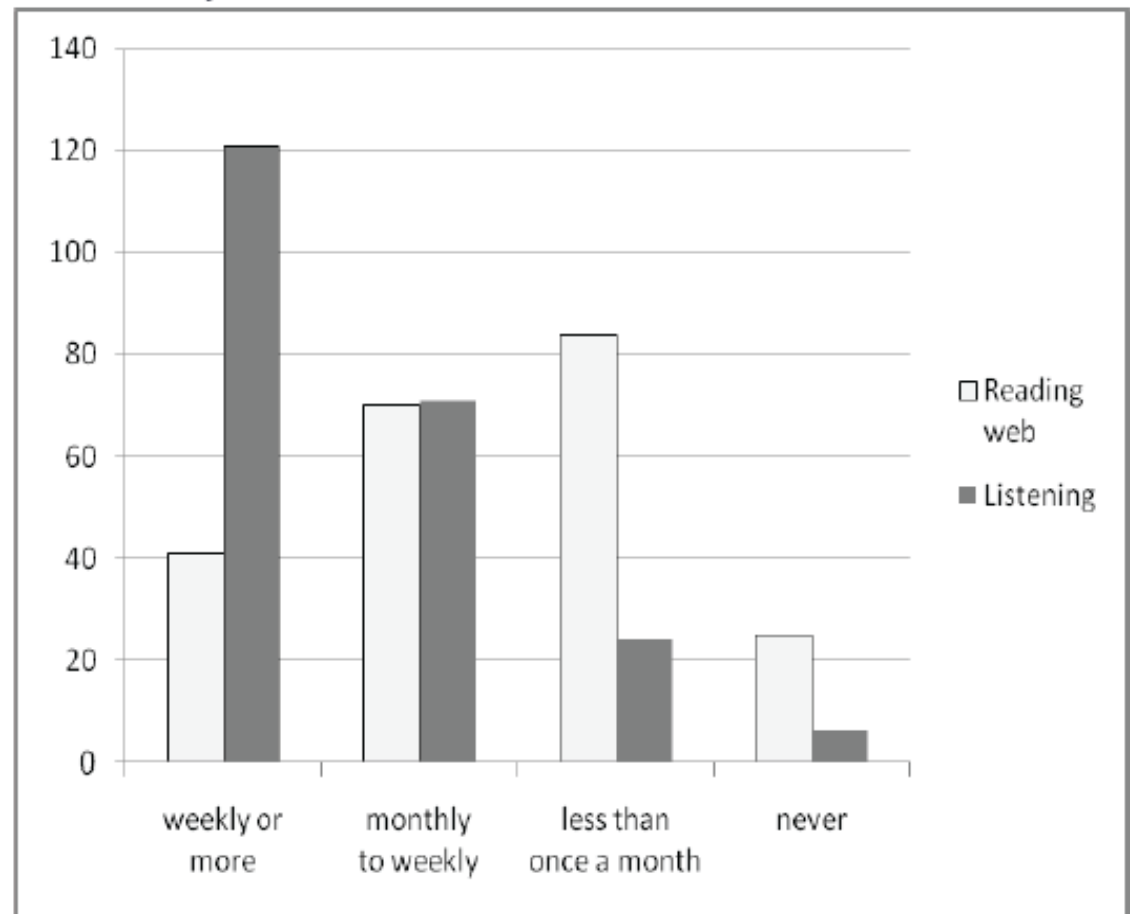
Non-specialist learners of English

Issue 2: patterns of E in E are changing rapidly

What does more recent private internet use change?

Listening comprehension

Figure 1. Frequency respondents engage in listening as compared to reading activities



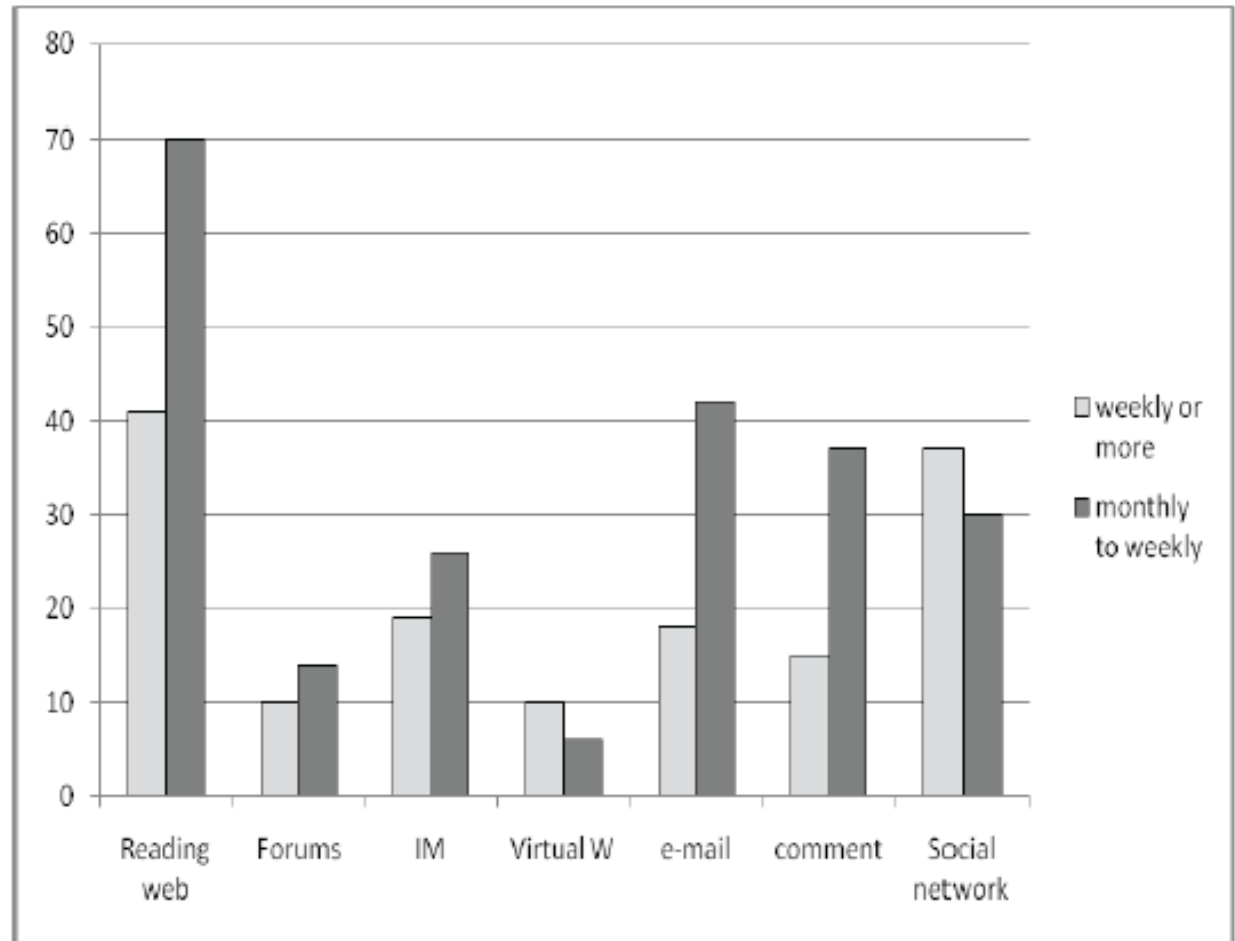
Online TV viewing a key element in a set of practices involving a majority of French students majoring in fields other than English.

- (N=225)
- Issue 3: English is becoming a vector for leisure activities.

Beyond input hypothesis

- the most frequent interactive language activity. Is social networking
- Texts with known authors, tailored for specific recipients.

Figure 3. Types of reading and written interaction



Communicative activities

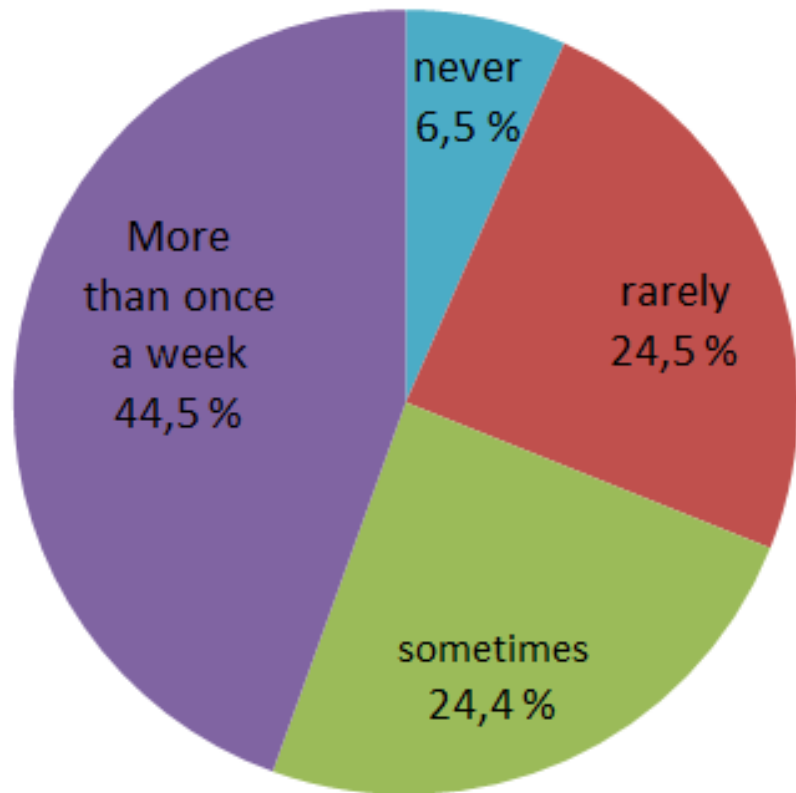
- . Belonging to a community (communities) of practice.
- . The purpose is communication on a theme, not language learning.
- . Developing an L2 identity (Norton 1997)
- . Issue 4: Using English in virtual communities for pragmatic reasons

Identified communities and registers: learner quotes from a diary study

The blog is a collaborative community; every member can post notes and comments and there are moderators to supervise the whole website. **The language used is a very young, everyday life English; it is a language of communication for native and non-native speakers.**

...it is really different from what I have learnt in class before... that is to say **a more colloquial way of expressing oneself**. I have enriched my vocabulary and I know I unconsciously or more exactly **naturally reuse my friends' expressions when I write to them, but also when I am led to speak English, which is a real satisfaction.**

Incidental acquisition requires high-frequency exposure



Addiction to online viewing of US TV series provides this frequency.

Sometimes = more than once a month.

Max = 35h/wk
(what they say they do)

Is language development taking place ?

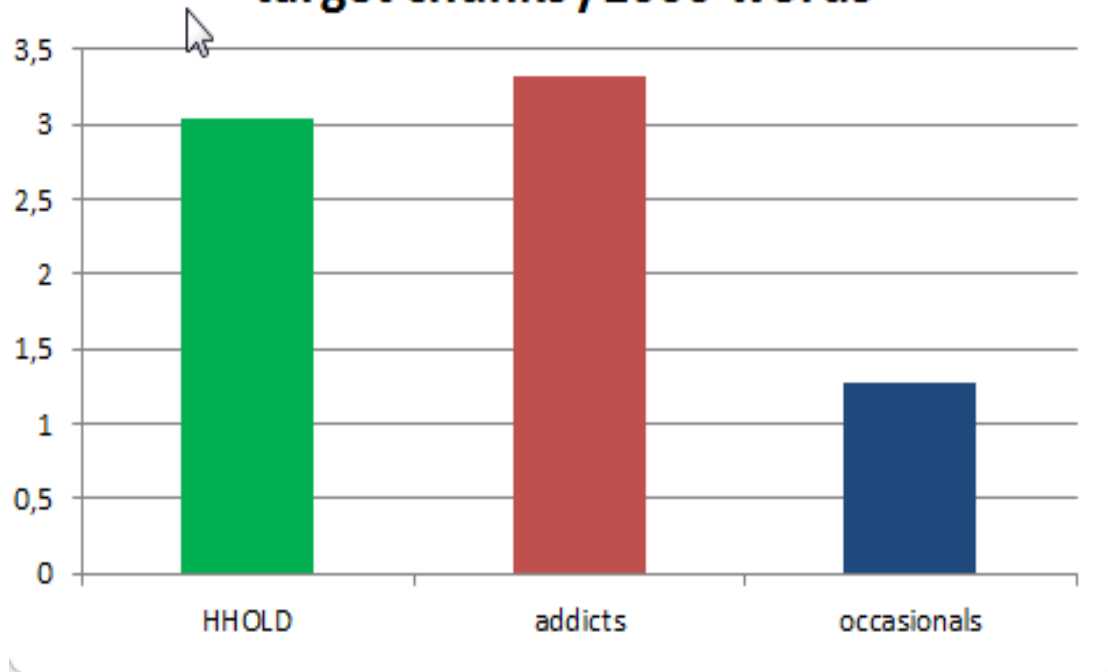
1	WHAT ARE YOU DOING
2	I WANT YOU TO
3	YOU WANT ME TO
4	WHAT DO YOU THINK
5	I DONT WANT TO
6	WHAT DO YOU WANT
7	ARE YOU DOING HERE
8	NO NO NO NO
9	YOU DONT HAVE TO
10	I NEED YOU TO

VKS testing of the 42 most frequently occurring 4-word chunks of language in TV series.

- **Regular watchers** correctly translated chunks with an average score of **38.8**
- **Non-regular watchers** correctly translated chunks with an average score of **34.58**
- T test: significant at the 0.005 level
(n=45)

Is language development taking place?

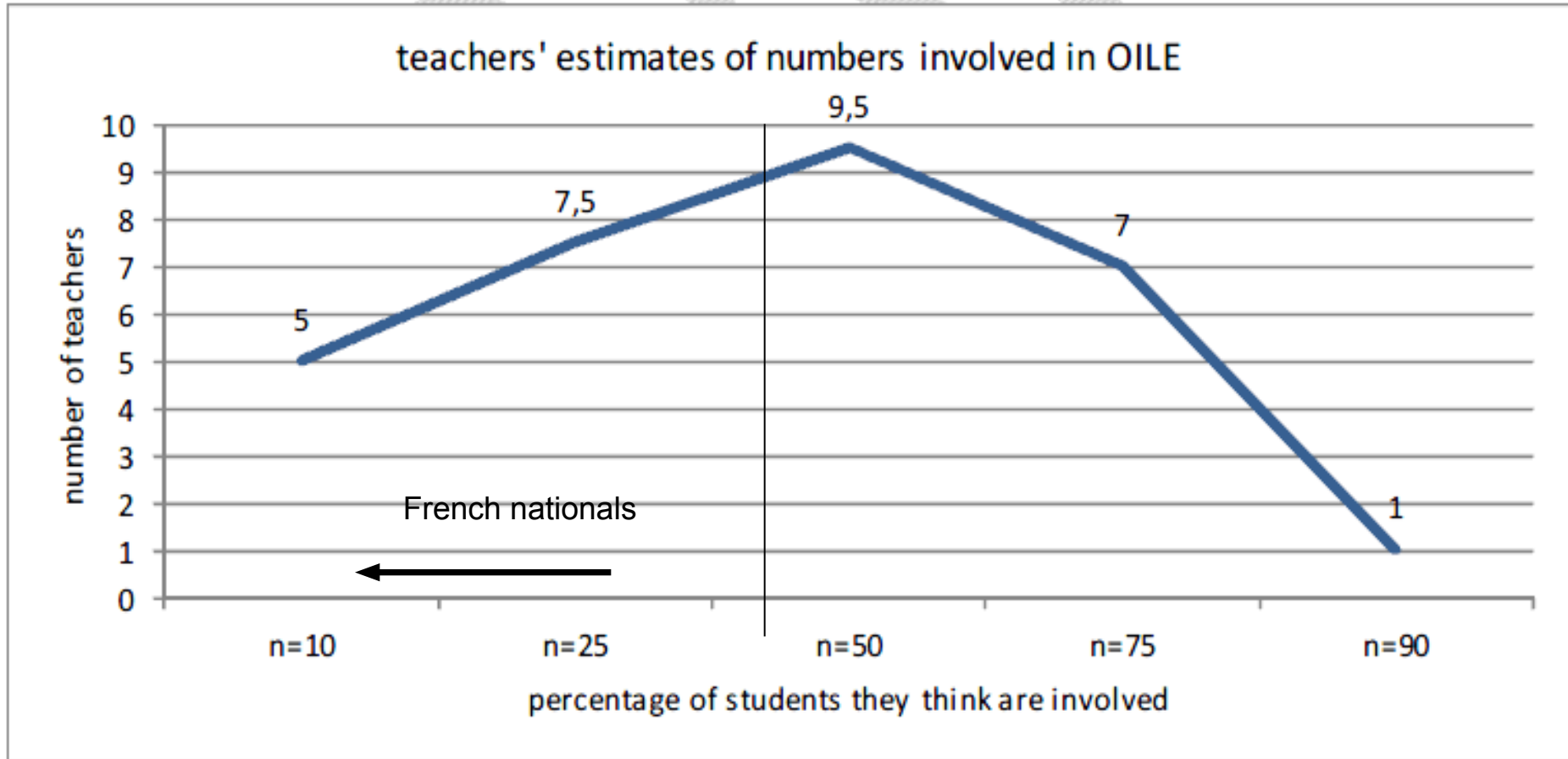
target chunks /1000 words



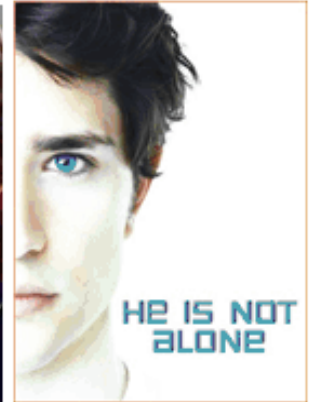
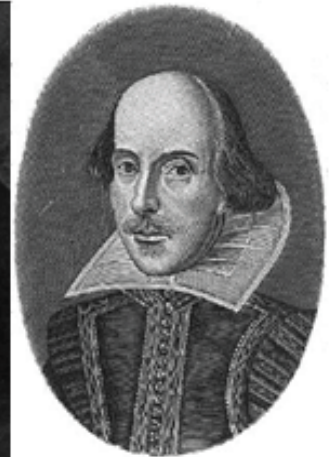
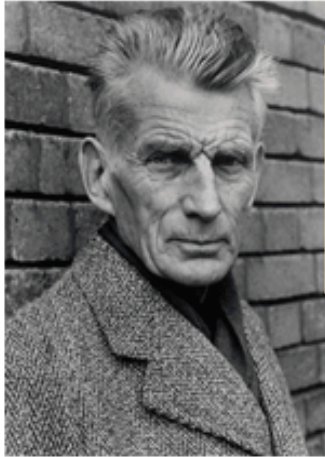
Fan fiction study

Frequent and infrequent original version viewers writing imaginary scenes from favorite series

Teacher attitudes: finding it easy to construe learners as users?



Can teachers have to take learner repertoires seriously? The French teacher training syllabus (above) is far from learner preoccupations (below)



- *Issue 4: E in E is not the property of intellectuals*

Consequences of a strengthening of language skills

New approaches to teacher training need to take these phenomena on board.

Public(classroom) / private (home) is a challenge.

Opportunities for increased participation

- . Increased international mobility
- . Bringing French research in from the cold as academic writing and presentation skills improve.

.What form does OILE take elsewhere in Europe?

The fine print

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martine

s'emmerde sans megaupload !



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Thanks